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ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2079

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State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

**By** House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry (originally sponsored by Representatives Schmidt, Riccelli, Low, Christian, Klicker, Ormsby, McClintock, and Couture)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving school safety by extending and  
2 increasing penalties for interference by, or intimidation by threat  
3 of, force or violence at schools and athletic activities; adding a  
4 new section to chapter 28A.635 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that incidents  
7 of violence in elementary and secondary schools raise concerns about  
8 ensuring and promoting school safety. For learning to occur, schools  
9 must first be safe places for students and staff. The legislature  
10 recognizes that violent behavior tends to escalate if tolerated, thus  
11 it is the intent of the legislature to provide targeted and  
12 appropriate sanctions for the interference with school activities by  
13 force or violence before it rises to the level of substantial or  
14 grievous bodily harm.

15 (2) The legislature understands that extracurricular athletics  
16 provide valuable opportunities for students to develop social and  
17 personal skills that can be useful throughout their lives. These  
18 activities also benefit other students and spectators by building  
19 school spirit, unity, community support, and community identity.  
20 Extracurricular athletics would not be possible without the  
21 commitment of officials, judges, referees, and volunteers who work at

1 the events for little or no financial gain. The legislature finds  
2 that the values engendered in interscholastic activities are being  
3 undermined by participants and spectators who do not respect the  
4 commitment of these officials. Increasingly, these people are  
5 expressing their dissatisfaction through inappropriate verbal abuse  
6 and behavior directed at the officials. The legislature recognizes  
7 that officials, such as judges and referees, and volunteers acting as  
8 officials, for extracurricular athletic activities of elementary and  
9 secondary school students are particularly vulnerable to  
10 inappropriate conduct because their attention is focused on the  
11 athletic activities. Thus, the legislature intends to provide  
12 additional support and protection for officials conducting  
13 interscholastic events.

14 (3) The legislature finds that violence against public and  
15 private students and staff is unacceptable. Thus, to promote a safe  
16 learning environment, the legislature intends to increase the penalty  
17 for those perpetrating violence against students and school staff.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.635  
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1) Signage must be posted notifying the public of the offenses  
21 and possible penalties under RCW 28A.635.090 and 28A.635.100.

22 (2) The signage must be prominently displayed at any entrance to  
23 a public school gymnasium or auditorium and wherever other public  
24 notices are placed at public school athletic fields.

25 (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
26 develop a standard signage form notifying the public of the offenses  
27 and possible penalties under RCW 28A.635.090 and 28A.635.100.

28 (4) As used in this section, "public school" has the same meaning  
29 as in RCW 28A.150.010.

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